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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [PINR](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S BREAKFAST WITH KDH CHAIRMAN PAVOL
HRUSOVSKY

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 601

[1B](#). BRATISLAVA 594
[1C](#). BRATISLAVA 592

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Chairman of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) Pavol Hrusovsky on July 25 to discuss KDH's post-election prospects. Despite a poor showing in the June 17 parliamentary election, Hrusovsky appeared confident that KDH would remain a major player in the Slovak political scene and a strong figure in the opposition. He expressed frustration at internal party conflicts (refB), but maintained hope that the party would reach an agreement on what direction to follow. Hrusovsky did not hold high expectations for Fico's government, predicting problems between the controversial leaders, corruption allegations for Smer, and the disintegration of the ruling coalition within the year. In such a scenario, HZDS would dispose of Meciar, and then a 3-plus-1 coalition would be acceptable to KDH. END SUMMARY.

HRUSOVSKY CONFIDENT IN FAITHFULNESS OF VOTERS

[12](#). (C) At a two-hour breakfast hosted at the Ambassador's residence, KDH Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky reflected on the disappointing results of the June 17 parliamentary election, in which his party received the lowest percentage of votes among the parties entering Parliament, at 8.31 percent (refA). Hrusovsky attributed the lack of electoral success to KDH's decision to prematurely exit the government in February, leaving then-PM Mikulas Dzurinda the sole position to claim the mantle of reform. Hrusovsky blamed that decision on recently-resigned Deputy Chairmen Frantisek Miklosko and Vladimir Palko. Nonetheless, he continues to be optimistic, as KDH was only one seat short of its performance in the previous elections. Furthermore, KDH remains the only party to claim socially-conservative voters, who Hrusovsky claimed would "never leave the party."

THESE PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO BE IN COALITION WITH ANYBODY

[13](#). (C) Hrusovsky remained frustrated by the "principled faction" (refB) of KDH -- made up of recently-resigned leaders Vladimir Palko, Daniel Lipsic, Frantisek Miklosko, Rudolf Bauer, and Pavol Minarik -- and their inflexibility: "These people don't want to be in coalition with anyone: not Dzurinda, not Fico, not Meciar, not Slota. It is crazy." Still, Hrusovsky retained some hope of reaching an agreement, as former Justice Minister Lipsic showed some willingness to bend, and Bauer would go "which way he was told." Hrusovsky's biggest challenge was to get the five dissenters to find a common position "in the emergency that could result from the break-up of the coalition" -- which he thinks will happen as a result of the democratic-backsliding of coalition

partner Vladimir Meciar, and to a lesser extent, the offensive outbursts of third coalition partner Jan Slota. Although Hrusovsky professed not yet to understand what was motivating Palko and his faction, he planned to use the time before the next Party Congress to reach out and hear their concerns.

MECIAR STILL UNACCEPTABLE TO KDH

14. (C) Any hope from Dzurinda that KDH might still be coaxed to accept Meciar (refC) seemed dim, especially given the venom between Meciar and Hrusovsky. Apparently rumors had been circulating during coalition talks that HZDS would oust Meciar. KDH's hesitance to join a coalition with Smer had not been so much out of reluctance to work with the leftist party, but rather out of hopes for a 3-plus-1 coalition that excluded Meciar.

15. (C) Although Hrusovsky acknowledged the fact that Meciar had honored his commitments to the Dzurinda government over the past three years, he maintained that these were deals where Dzurinda had had something, such as a hospital privatization, to offer Meciar. It was for this reason that Hrusovsky considered Meciar so dangerous: "How can you trust a guy who was negotiating with Dzurinda one hour before he and Fico were to sign the coalition agreement?" Hrusovsky believed Meciar would jump to a 3-plus-one coalition at any moment just to get an additional ministry, and has supported the U.S. and the Slovak mission in Iraq as a way to win international acceptance.

16. (C) Hrusovsky believed that Meciar did not care for the money ministries since all his cronies had already profited during his eight years as PM in the 1990s. Instead, he opted for the power-Ministry of Justice and the Slovak Information Service (SIS). The HZDS party structure was upset with

Meciar because his focus on a ministry designed for his own self-protection prevented greater spoils going to his party faithful. Hrusovsky predicted that Meciar would use new Justice Minister Stefan Harabin to systematically disassemble the Ministry and western standards of prosecutorial jurisprudence: "Meciar will control investigations from the moment they start until the moment they are finished."

(Comment: Other interlocutors have told us Meciar appointed Harabin as Minister of Justice mostly to take revenge on KDH.

End comment.) According to Hrusovsky, proposed deputy director of the Slovak Information Service Igor Urban (still unconfirmed) was and is a front for Ivan Lexa. (Note: Lexa was SIS boss under Meciar and has been charged of multiple crimes including the abduction of the then-president's son, and the death of a witness in the case. He has never been convicted, due both to poor prosecution and alleged court corruption. Meciar has made public statements calling for Lexa's rehabilitation. End comment.) The Ambassador asked if former-Justice Minister Lipsic now understood that KDH's stance on "principle" had real consequences in the ministry he had built? Hrusovsky responded, "Yes, more than one person at the party conference made that point."

17. (C) In spite of Hrusovsky's distrust of Meciar, KDH could someday accept HZDS as long as its Chairman was ousted. However, this seems unlikely any time in the near future, as no one has discovered a way to knock Meciar overboard without being knocked into the waves first.

FORMER COALITION REMAINS UNITED IN THE OPPOSITION

18. (C) Dzurinda's SDKU and the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) remain strong allies of KDH. The three stand together on several issues, particularly reform, foreign policy, and the protection of freedom in Slovakia. Hrusovsky reassured the Ambassador that SDKU, SMK, and KDH continued to support the USG on Iraq. (COMMENT: Hrusovsky did not seem to think Fico would go against the U.S. in his foreign policy. END COMMENT.) As the opposition in Parliament, the three parties stand ready to blow the whistle on any suspicious business in the Meciar-controlled Ministry of Justice.

¶9. (C) Hrusovsky's only area of concern was nationalist tension between SMK and SNS. He feared SMK extremists would take SNS Chairman Jan Slota,s bait, and there were several Hungarian nationalist issues which KDH could not support, such as demands for autonomy in southern regions. However, Hrusovsky did not see any obstacles to working with SDKU and former-PM Dzurinda. Although there has been competition between the two parties in the past, there were defining lines between them which would make it impossible for them to steal each other's voters. SDKU had a strong economic program, while KDH boasted its social program. Hrusovsky hopes to appeal to Fico's voters with KDH's social program.

HRUSOVSKY'S PREDICTIONS FOR FICO'S GOVERNMENT

¶10. (C) Hrusovsky did not hold high expectations for Fico's government, predicting problems between the controversial leaders, corruption scandals for Smer, and the eventual disintegration of the ruling coalition. Regarding former HZDS-turned-Smer "businessmen" who may cause corruption problems for the new government, he said Vladimir Poor and Jan Gabriel have already had their past examined and they are known damaged quantities. Businessman Juraj Siroky is another matter. There is a real chance that Siroky will be dragged into the Harvard tunneling scandal in the court system in the Czech Republic -- with new revelations likely to damage Fico. Hrusovsky recommended the Ambassador should not meet with Meciar nor with Slota, noting, "Meciar is not reformed and Slota would only insult you."

VALLEE